

national park service

For Immediate Release
December 4, 2000

John A. Dell'Osso
(415) 663-8522, ext. 226

Deer Census to be Conducted at Point Reyes

On Tuesday, December 5th, Park biologists will fly over the entire Point Reyes National Seashore to acquire an accurate count of non-native deer. The National Park Service has proposed a count of all axis (*Axis axis*) and fallow deer (*Dama dama*) in Point Reyes National Seashore using a helicopter tomorrow. Simultaneously with the aerial counts, observers will count deer from the ground in multiple census units in order to estimate sightability of deer in a variety of habitats. Counts would be used to produce scientific population counts for both species of non-native deer. This data, along with range and demographic information gained from fieldwork, will allow park management to draft a plan for the management of the non-native deer species after public input is received.

The Environmental Assessment, "Census of Non-Native Deer", was mailed on September 22, 2000 to 100 individuals, public agencies, conservation organizations and interested non-profit groups. Mailed along with the EA was notice of an October 21, 2000 public meeting of the Point Reyes National Seashore Citizen's Advisory Committee during which the proposed census would be described. Notice of the meeting was also published in the *Point Reyes Light* on October 19, 2000. Public comment on the environmental assessment was received from six individuals and one organization. The majority of the public comment addressed the overall management strategy for non-native deer at Point Reyes National Seashore rather than the proposed census.

"The intention of these aerial counts is to gain sound, scientific knowledge on the number of non-native deer and their distribution," stated Superintendent Don Neubacher. "The public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft management plan once it is written."

-more-

Potential impacts to listed species would be minimized by the timing of the aerial operations

Point Reyes National Seashore

Point Reyes Station, California 94956

during non-nesting season for northern spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) and snowy

plovers (*Charadrius alexandrius*), and by-passing of pinniped haul-out beaches by ¼ mile. Visual, aesthetic and safety impacts to the public would be minimized by a temporary closure of Seashore campgrounds for the duration of the helicopter operation, and by the helicopter's avoidance of local communities and ranch buildings.

Please visit our expanded website at www.nps.gov/pore and visit the California Fedpage at fedpage.doi.nps for information on all Federal natural resource agencies in California.

###